

## Clinton and Obamacare, Downton Abbey style service jobs on the rise and Hawaii legalises same-sex marriage – US blog round up for 9 – 15 November

**Chris Gilson** looks at the best in political blogging from the Beltway and across the States.

### Affordable Care

The controversy over President Obama's previous claim that people would be able to keep their health insurance under the terms of the Affordable Care Act (which turned out to be false) continued this week. After last week's apology by the President for his earlier (now seemingly broken) promise, *The Foundry* looks at the [three more apologies](#) he may soon be making on Obamacare. *Workblog* blames [former President Bill Clinton](#) for Obama's broken promise, writing that Clinton's failed reforms of the 1990s would have taken away most people's insurance plans, and that the current administration tried to claim the complete opposite about the current healthcare plan as a result. Meanwhile, *Hit & Run* looks at how bad the problems with Obamacare's rollout might get, especially if the exchanges continue to malfunction. Their answer? [A whole lot worse](#). *Red State* says that Obamacare is [drawing con-men 'like flies'](#), as some try and capitalise on the failing Healthcare.gov site by offering their own fraudulent alternatives. *Roll Call* is more cautious, arguing that, given many start-up companies often experience technical issues, we should see how Obamacare works [over the long haul](#).

On Monday, *The Atlantic* looks at the [latest efforts](#) by the Republican Party to slow down Obamacare, including an oversight hearing that may delay repairs to the Healthcare.gov site, a new bill in Congress that increases the amount of red-tape for Obamacare 'navigators' (people and organizations that help the poor to sign up), and fresh fear-mongering about 'medical privacy' issues. Meanwhile, *National Journal* [examines](#) the growing divide within the Democratic Party over Obamacare.

On Wednesday, the Department of Health and Human Services announced the enrollment numbers for Obamacare – just over [105,000](#) according to *The Atlantic*. *Hit & Run* is skeptical of the figures, given that they cover the number of people who have selected plans, rather than paying for the first month's premiums. In any case, *American Thinker* [says](#) that the Chicago Cubs will win the World Series before enough people are enrolled in the program.

### Government and the Beltway

One year after his re-election, *The Atlantic* profiles President Barack Obama's '[Terrible, Horrible, No-good, Very Bad Year](#)', that now mean that his approval ratings are around 40 percent.



Former President Bill Clinton Credit: LSE in Pictures

Last week Republican Chris Christie was re-elected as Governor of New Jersey in a landslide, and speculation has turned towards his ambitions for the Presidency in 2016. On Sunday, *Crooks & Liars* looks at a video interview with Christie, who [states](#) that he is prepared to make the Republican Party more relevant to a broader group than it currently is, following in the footsteps of former President Ronald Reagan. Reviewing another of Christie's interviews on Monday, *Wonkblog* [points out](#) that he is reluctant to give his opinion on national policy questions – something that may risk undermining him.

In the wake of elections last week, many have been quick to comment on what the results mean more widely. *Daily Kos* [says](#) that Republican losses in Virginia and victories in New Jersey should 'chasten' the Tea Party, but will likely only embolden them to push more support from the GOP establishment. *Doug Ross* echoes this by saying that the Republican Party effectively '[pulled the plug](#)' on their losing pro-gun rights candidate in Virginia, Ken Cuccinelli. *RothenBlog* argues, on the other hand, that most post-mortems of the Virginia gubernatorial race are wrong – he says that all the GOP candidate needed to do to win, was to '[get white guys and their wives](#)'. Meanwhile, *The New Yorker* says that the meaning of last week's results for the 2014 and 2016 elections are [not immediately clear](#), other than that they show an increasingly alienated electorate.

Turning to the Democratic Party, *The Left Coaster* says that we may be in for an [intraparty battle](#) in the lead up to the 2016 Presidential election between more progressive Democrats, like Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Hilary Clinton, who has closer ties to Wall Street. This point is [echoed](#) by *Political Carnival* who covers Warren's statement on Tuesday that the problem of banks that are thought to be 'too big to fail' is still a real one.

*The Monkey Cage* looks at political maps of America, writing that, if you account for where people live, most people actually live in a [purple state](#), rather than a red or blue one.

While immigration reform is on the agenda of many in Congress and nationally, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that it is unlikely to be on Congress' for the remainder of the year, as the few days remaining in the legislative calendar would not be enough for the complex issue to be taken up. Meanwhile, *National Journal* [ponders](#) if anyone will remember House Speaker John Boehner, who is in the final year of his term, and has not had much in the way of legislative accomplishments in the last year.

## Foreign policy

This week also sees an agreement take shape between Iran and China, France, Russia, the UK, the U.S., and Germany over the country's nuclear program. On Saturday, *Via Meadia* has a good [overview](#) of the regional and domestic political implications of the nascent deal, writing that the discussions could be the most consequential for the region since World War One. On Monday, *American Thinker* says that France's tough line with Iran in the negotiations shows that America may have become the new '[surrender monkey](#)'.

Looking at recent revelations over the National Security Agency's spying and surveillance practices, *Hit & Run* says that even if the spying is legal, it's still [wrong in any case](#) because of its privacy implications and the potential for it to be abused.



Press Conference with Secretary of State John Kerry on P5+1 Talks on Iran's Nuclear Program Credit: United States Mission Geneva (Creative Commons BY SA)

## The economy and society

Monday was Memorial Day, and *Outside the Beltway* [marked](#) the occasion by looking at those who have served their country, but do not qualify as veterans because their discharge was 'other than honorable'. This group does not qualify for government assistance, even though their misconduct may be related to the stresses of war. *Wonkblog* looks at the very [high rate of unemployment](#) among veterans – around 10 percent – and some of the obstacles they face in getting work, including disability and a lack of civilian experience. *Political Carnival* [shows](#) an amazing time-lapse of a homeless veteran made over by a veterans' support charity.

This week sees a fall in the labor force participation rate to 63 percent, its lowest level since 1978. *United Liberty* [says](#) that this is a result of increased regulation under Obama as well as higher taxes and increased spending by the government. Looking into the future of American jobs, *Via Meadia* [says](#) that a UK-style 'Downton Abbey' service class of butlers and maids may be on the cards.

In light of internet retailer Amazon's co-opting of the U.S. Postal Service for Sunday deliveries, *Wonkblog* [looks](#) at whether or not the company should just buy the government agency. Meanwhile, *The Atlantic* [says](#) that while pay television in America has had its worst year ever, internet-TV services such as YouTube and Hulu are largely complementing cable bundles, rather than replacing them.

This week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration indicated that it would move to phase out trans-fats; something that *The Hill's Congress blog* [says](#) is a smokescreen to divert attention away from the potential health effects of genetically modified food. Meanwhile, *The Lonely Conservative* [says](#) that the move is another measure by the 'food police' who know better than people what foods should be bought and eaten.

## Across the States

### Northeast

Vermont's *VTDigger* [says](#) that the state's Republican Party has elected a moderate to be their new party chair, which may now help the state party be more palatable to moderates and independents.

*Blue Jersey* [looks](#) at newly re-elected Governor Chris Christie's comments that Obama should apologize for his earlier statements about people retaining private insurance under Obamacare, and that state health insurance exchanges wouldn't work. They argue that state-exchanges are working better than the federal system – something that Christie should acknowledge.

New York's *Capitol Confidential* blog [looks](#) at the state's secretive Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act – the secrecy of which is only now becoming apparent as journalists ask the state government how many assault weapon owners have registered under the new law, and are refused the information under a confidentiality clause.

### South

Texas' *Burnt Orange Report* [says](#) that on Saturday, Democratic State Senator Wendy Davis filed to be on the ballot for the 2014 gubernatorial election. Still in Texas, *Outside the Beltway* reports that a candidate won a local



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election by [pretending to be black](#). Meanwhile, *Brain and Eggs* [says](#) that the state has the worst conservatives in the country, citing a number of incidents, including one where 40 armed men, women, and children waited outside a restaurant to protest a membership meeting for the state chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

Florida's *SaintPetersblog* looks at [Charles Crist](#), who is again standing to be the state's governor, saying that he must earn their vote, and can do so if he is willing to be a pragmatic governor who understands Florida's problems.

In Maryland, *Monoblogue* [examines](#) the candidates' stances on education ahead of the race for the governorship in 2014.

Democratic Governor Mike Beebe wins [praise](#) from the *Arkansas Blog* for his compromise with the Republican state legislature to expand Medicaid in the state, saying that it is further evidence of how Governors can succeed where Washington has failed.

*Delaware Liberal* [looks](#) at whether State House Republicans are about to change their mind on the death penalty, after they asked their Facebook followers if a Bill to repeal the measure in the state should be tabled or released to be considered by the House.

## Midwest

*South Dakota War College* looks at what might be the opening salvo in a [civil war](#) for the state's Tea Party. Across state lines in North Dakota, *SayAnythingblog.com* [looks](#) at whether or not Senator Heidi Heitkamp actually did donate her shutdown salary to charity, as she had promised, given that her senior Senate colleague, John Hoeven donated his salary, and more.

Ohio's *Plunderbund* [says](#) that the state's charter schools are exempted from 150 state education laws, and are also far less accountable than public schools. Still on education, in Michigan, *eclecta blog* [writes](#) that the state's Republican Party has formed a special Senate Committee to attack teachers' unions.

*PoliticMO* [reports](#) that the automatic rise in the Missouri's minimum wage (to \$7.50) has drawn renewed criticism from the state's Chamber of Commerce.

## West and Pacific

Hawaii's *Honolulu Civil Beat* [says](#) that the Senate's legislation to legalize same-sex marriage in the state would pass this week, despite opposition from Christian groups and Republicans.

*WyoFile* [wonders](#) why Wyoming insists on punishing poor people, by only allowing the poor to gain health coverage under Medicaid if they meet a requirement to work up to 20 hours a week.

California's *Capitol Beat* [looks](#) at the ongoing case of Democratic State Senator, Ron Calderon, who has been stripped of his committee assignments following allegations that he took bribes from an undercover FBI agent and a hospital executive.

## And finally...

*Arkansas Blog* looks at the increasing prevalence of pictures of candidates [holding guns](#).

*SaintPetersblog* [says](#) that, due to higher fees, specialty license plates are on the decline in Florida.

For your Friday amusement, Alaska's *Mudflats* showcases a [moose's attempts at eating a pumpkin](#).

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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USApp— American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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Spectators watch same-sex marriage debate outside Hawaii Capitol 77krc (Creative Commons BY-NC



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